

# ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM

# 2

FEBRUARY 1975



ISLAMIC CULTURE SOCIETY (JAPAN)

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An interior view of Tokyo Mosque: Mihrab and Mimbar.

The mosque was established in 1938 at Ooyama-cho, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo

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FEBRUARY  
1975

## OVERSEAS EDITION

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM* is an English language quarterly magazine of the Islamic Culture Society (Japan).

*ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM* does make efforts to promote understanding of Islam as a cultural force.

*ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM* also does make efforts to foster mutual understanding among peoples irrespective of race, religion or geography.

*ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM* does not associate itself with any political, nationalistic or ideological platform.

*ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM* invites articles, views, correspondences, information or photographs relating to Islam from contributors all over the world.

*ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM* is not responsible for the opinions expressed by the contributors.

*ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM* reserves the right of selecting or editing articles received from the contributors for publication.

*ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM* receives with thanks articles, correspondences, etc. gratis unless specified by its Editor.

*ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM* sends five copies of the issue, or more on special request, to a contributor when his article is published.

*ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM* is distributed free of cost to overseas friends of Islam.

**ABU BAKR MORIMOTO**

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## TO OUR READERS

By the immense grace of Allah, the Merciful, we again present ourselves to you with the second issue of the ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM. Inshallah, we shall make our best of efforts so that its subsequent issues also reach you regularly.

In October last year, we despatched the first issue of the ICF to our innumerable readers in 83 countries all over the world, both by air mail and surface mail. The friendly reaction we received from our readers was beyond our greatest of expectations. Among the various friendly advices we received, the most common ones are; 1) the publication of ICF magazine must continue by any means and be despatched to our readers; 2) more information regarding Islam in Japan and the Japanese Muslims should be provided; and so on.

It is our pious commitment to respond to these demands. As to the demand for continuity of the magazine, first of all, we express our deep thanks to you all for your affection to this magazine. We are making all efforts within our means to keep it alive and to see that it reaches to you under the auspices of the Islamic Culture Society which is an organization run only by the grace of Allah and the individual contribution of goodwill by its members, friends and well-wishers. While Japan is called an economic power, the Muslims here are not rich, nor are their number large. Islamic Culture Society also does not get any financial support for its management from any quarters, in Japan or abroad. Therefore, although we announced in the last issue that the ICF will be published bimonthly, our very meagre financial resources have compelled us to make it a quarterly from this issue. And we want to keep it alive as quarterly at any cost. We hope our readers will kindly show understanding to our difficulties.

As regard more information about Islam in Japan, we hope you will be glad that from this issue we are introducing more stories about Islam in Japan starting with a life-sketch of Haji Umar Mita, an Islamic leader of Japan.

ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM is making efforts to earn goodwill of our brothers all over the world as well of our friends everywhere irrespective of faith, toward the flourishing of Islam in this country and also for the promotion of mutual understanding among all men. In fact, the people of the universe, irrespective of place and time, race and geography, have become so close among themselves that it is difficult to separate altogether like the past. Promoting mutual understanding and friendship and considering that all people are brothers and sisters from the point of view of religion as well as humanism, cannot we think of avoiding insensible and unhappy happenings among human beings?

"All Muslims are brothers and sisters" – This was one of the most memorable last message of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) to his followers. So great is the impact of this teaching that this is a thing that we want to realize for the whole humanity even in this age some 1400 years later.

# USE OF SYMBOLS IN RELIGIONS

Muhammad Hamidullah

God, our Creator, is a Necessary Being, though unseeable. Naturally man longs to go to Him, and pay Him respects and thanks. Religion in the sense of the method of these relations between the creature and the Creator is a very old institution in human society, hence subject to evolution. Even if there has been inspiration or revelation from God to man, in this matter, that was to change according to the change occurring in man himself.

Islam is the last of the great religions in the world. It will be interesting to study its method with that of its predecessors.

## Symbolic Representation of God

There are direct and indirect methods of paying respect to someone. If I say to an artist: "how clever you are", he is flattered, and if I say nothing to him, and even ignoring his identity, if I exclaim: "what a nice picture", he is as much flattered. That applies to the worship of God also.

Of the older religions, the Zoroastrians worship Fire. May be, at the time when they began that, man had just dominated fire, and knew how to preserve this mightiest and most irresistible of elements; and man had then in mind nothing

but the indirect way of praising the Creator of Fire, and worshipping Him and not His creature.

Another old religion is the Brahmanism in which cow is the object of the same solicitude. If fire symbolises the Power of God, cow meant to man, who had just domesticated it in a fertile country, the greatest beneficence of God on man: cow ploughed the fields, transported loads, gave milk to drink, even, after death, gave flesh to eat, etc.

Soon man wanted to emphasise that God had not one attribute (power or beneficence) but many. Hence idolatry. Every artistic mind suggested some new form. For instance, man, with his only two hands is capable to do things we know; God is capable to do uncomparably more things, so He must have four, six or even more hands. Man with his small head is able to accomplish so many things; a bigger head, say that of an elephant — the biggest that man saw in the nature — will be able to symbolise the greater amount of the science of God.

Some other people began worshipping stars, so high and so full of influence on the destiny of the earth with its seasons, rain etc.

In short, either the person or some of the attributes of God were adopted as subject of symbol to represent the unseeable God.

The Quran of Muslims repeatedly says: follow the religion brought by Abraham (Ibrâhîm), and it is also the Quran (III, 96) which informs that the first House dedicated to God is the one in the valley of Bakka, at Mecca, built (or rather restored after Adam's building had completely vanished) by Abraham. It is after Mecca, that the house of God was constructed in Jerusalem, etc.

The idea is touching. Do not try to describe the indescribable and unseeable God; adopt a house of God, and with the house the owner and occupant of the house along with his property is automatically understood. So instead of the person or some attribute of God, Abraham and his descendants had recourse to the House of God, where one has absolutely no need of representing the imaginary figure of the owner.

I have had the good fortune of visiting this oldest House of God existing on the surface of the earth. Even its plan is symbolic and awe-inspiring: a cube super-imposed by a semi-circle. Why?

There is a saintly and thrilling saying of the Prophet Muhammad of Islam, God bless him: "God says: once I searched an abode; the earth vast as it is could not suffice for Me; the heaven so much the vaster was still too narrow for Me; at last I found that the heart of the Believer could suffice Me". The house of God must have the shape of

the heart of man, heart of the believer! The ground plan of the Ka'bah in Mecca is a square to which in one direction is added a semi-circle, the whole becoming like a human heart.

### **Symbolism in the Method of Worship**

There is a beautiful verse in the Quran (XXII, 18): "Hast thou not seen that prostrate before God all those who are in the heavens and all those who are on earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the mountains, and the trees, and the animals, and also many of the men? There are also many (of men) on whom the punishment is realised; whomsoever God dishonours, there is none to honour him. God does verily what He likes".

We have three kingdoms in the nature, the minerals (or the so-called inanimate things), the animals and the plants. According to the above verse they also worshipfully prostrate before God. How?

Service means doing what the master orders the slave to do. God has ordered the Mountains to rest motionless, and that is their way of doing service to the Lord. If you look around, you will see that all animals, be they four-legged or birds or else, are perpetually bent and inclined. That is their service of worship. The plants have their mouths in their roots, through which they seek their nourishment; the roots are perpetually posed on the ground, which means they are perpetually in prostration. (I can go on describing the way of worship of stars, water, shade of things under the sun etc., which are mentioned in the above and other verses, for which see my humble book "Intro-



*duction to Islam*”, which is available in many versions, English, French, German, Arabic, Yugoslav, Turkish, etc.)

If a religion combined the services of the three kingdoms of minerals, of plants and of animals, (and Islam does that in which the person praying, first remains standing motionless, then bends and then falls in prostration), it will already be the synthesis of the universe. But there is something more:

Among human religions, we have seen above that the Zoroastrianism and Brahmanism praises God, invoking His attributes.

The Jews recite solemnly the passages of the Bible, which they name “Word of God”. The significance is deep: If a blind man is lost in a difficult place and is lonely, the only way of guiding him is to shout him from far off, even unseen: forward, turn to the right, turn to the left, do this, avoid that, and so on and so forth. God also wants to guide His blind worshipper that is man, and indicates him how to proceed in order to reach to his beloved God.

The Christians have added to this the symbol of communion. In memory of what Jesus Christ had said during his last supper, they eat some bread and drink some drops of wine, and symbolically find themselves having in themselves the body and the blood of Christ, their God. Communion means to be one with someone else.

We have just seen that the Islamic way of the prayer is a synthesis of the prayers of the minerals, the plants and the animals, of the universe in short. Islam has amalgamated also the ways of the more developed religions. Muslims also praise God, and recite the

passages of the Quran, which they also believe to be the Word of God, revealed to the Prophet for being communicated to men. They have also their own way of being close to God, but in an abstract way: When two friends meet, one greets and the other replies to the greeting. When man approaches to God, and nothing worldly hinders him from the presence of God, man too offers greetings, and God replies kindly. That happened to the Prophet Muhammad during his ascension (*mi’rāj*), and Muslims too do that daily in their services of worship, in the final invocation (*tahiyât*, or *tashahhud*) the same exchange of salutation with God, symbolising as if the Muslim is received by God in His august presence, and replies graciously to his salutations.

One will see that the Islamic prayer is the amalgamation of the methods of prayers of the universe, in a harmonious whole.

### Symbolism in the Pilgrimage (Hajj)

Of the names given to God, perhaps the name “King” depicts most the relation of man with Him, His grandeur and man’s humbleness. For in human society, kings have held such a place, and we do not know in our languages anything better for describing power, riches etc. So the Quran would say God is a King, He has a throne, has armies and treasures, and has a kingdom. In a vast kingdom, there must be a capital; one of the pre-Islamic names of Mecca, retained by the Quran is *Umm al-Qurâ* (literally: metropolis). It is in the metropolis that can be found the royal palace; and in fact it is there the *Bait-Âliâh*



(House of God), the oldest dedicated on Earth to God, constructed by Adam, and restored by Abraham.

Now in a kingship, loyal subjects have had the habitude of going from all parts of the realm to the capital and taking oath of allegiance on the right hand of the monarch. The Holy Prophet of Islam has said, in a report transmitted by at least three of his companions, that “the Black Stone in the Ka’bah represents the right hand of God on earth”. As is well-known, the pilgrims going to Mecca, place their hands on the Black Stone, which is placed in an angle on the outer walls of the Ka’bah (House of God) and give it a reverential kiss. This act is called *istilām* (taking, that is, of the pact) and also *bai’ah* (pact, that is, of allegiance).

When the king is satisfied of our fidelity, the greatest honour he can do us is to allow us to guard his house, house which of course includes the owner and his property. That is the sense of the *tawâf* the sevenfold going around the House of God, mounting the guard and doing the work of the sentinal ceaselessly, (for the number seven symbolises: unlimited. Do not we see that the Time was unlimited having no beginning and no end, and when man wanted to calculate, he divided it into seven days of the week, which repeat themselves, there never being an eight day).

There are a few more rites in the pilgrimage whose symbolism may not be out of place:

All the pilgrims must assemble in ‘Arafât, in the suburbs of Mecca. Tradition says that when our ancestors, Adam and Eve were sent down to earth for

their committing a sin, they were separated. Later when God accepted their repentance, they were given the chance of reuniting, and they met in ‘Arafât. So it is the filial affection on the one hand, and on the other the symbol of God’s pardon and grace which we seek there, even as did our ancestors.

Then the pilgrims come to Mina, between ‘Arafât and Mecca, and pay a flying visit to Mecca, before returning to Mina and remaining there for three days. In Mecca they circumambulate the Ka’bah and run between two rocks, Safâ and Marwah, close to the House of God. Tradition says, when Abraham conducted his wife and nursling Ismael, by order of God, and left them in the desert at a waterless point, where later the town of Mecca would emerge. God wanted to show that He is capable to save human life even in such a hopeless region. A mother can bear every hardship but not the pain of her child. Ismael was crying of thirst. Hagar, the mother, had none with her, and none around her. So she ran to the close-by rock of Safâ and mounting it looked around for water. But in vain. Then she saw another rock, Marwah, a bit farther, and she ran and climbed it to see if there was water. But no. A motherly love never despairs. So she returned and climbed Safâ, then ran again to Marwah, always looking for water, and returning to see if no evil had attained the child. After the seventh — note the number “seven” of unlimitedness — errand, when she came back to see the child, God had created a spring underneath the heels of the baby which was kicking the ground in rage and agony.

The life of the child and also of the mother were saved, by the grace of God. Mother's love for her child is the symbol of the love of God for His creatures. The pilgrims cannot demand the grace and favour of God in a better place than the space between Safâ and Marwah, in front of the House of the Lord!

Abraham had to pass another test. He had affirmed: O God, I love Thee above all else! To prove that, he had abandoned his only child, Ismael in the desert, by order of God. God then said, a few years later: Immolate Ismael. Abraham consented without murmur or hesitation, and taking the hand of the child, went outside the township. En route, Satan came and tempted him by saying: It is only in the dream that you have learnt the order of God; dreams are not a sure thing. Abraham detected in him the devil, so he chased him away by stoning him. Satan returned in the guise of another person, and this time went to the wife, Hagar, and said: Your husband wants to kill your only child, prevent him from that. She also understood the intrigue and threw stones on him. Satan came in yet another guise and went to the child to tell: Your father wants to cut your throat and you will die, so tell him: I do not want that. He too, young as he was, threw stones on him to chase him away. Then Abraham calmly passed the knife on the neck of the child, but when he looked at the victim, it was a sheep, while Ismael was standing smiling nearby. — God was satisfied with Abraham's sincerity, and so He saved the child, and a sacrifice was substituted. That is

also what the Muslim pilgrims do at Minâ now: they stone the pillars of Satan, chasing the devilish temptations, and pay "blood-money" of their spiritual ancestor, Abraham-Ismael by sacrificing a sheep, which is meant, by the Quran, to feast the poor and the needy on this day of feast and rejoicing.

### Fasting

Like prayer, fasting is also found in the nature. In winter the plants fast, lose their foliage; after their fast, when spring arrives they get a new life. The winter sleep of the wild beasts represents the same thing: then they neither eat nor drink, yet do not die. Even inanimate objects, like our motors require rest after some work. Men too fast. In Islam during one whole month of Ramadân, from dawn to sun set, privation of food and drink is obligatory, and six more days in the following month, Shawwâl, are highly recommended. The symbol is as follows: Both a saying of the Prophet Muhammad and the Bible affirm that God had created Adam, first man, according to His image. A verse of the Quran goes farther (II, 138) and orders: "Try to get coloured by the colour of God, and whose colour can be better than that of God!" God does neither eat nor drink, but feeds. By fasting we try to resemble God according to our humble human capacities. Further, the Quran (VI, 160) gives the good tiding: "Whoever comes along with a good deed, his recompense is tenfold as much!" If we fast for one month, that is ten months. Six more days, like sixty days, make two more months, that is twelve months in all. That is why the Prophet

of Islam has said: "Whosoever fasts the month of Ramadân and thereafter six more days in the month of Shawwâl, it is like fasting for the whole year!" In other words, we, as cultivators for instance, offer the tithe of our harvest to the poor, symbol of offering to God. So too, we offer our food and drink

to God for one tenth of the year, and God in His grace accepts this offering for the time tenfold as much, the whole year, and for that reason, for our whole life (if we fast every year).

In short, in the Creed and in the Cult of Islam, there are symbols and possess deep spiritual significance.

The author of "INTRODUCTION TO ISLAM" needs no special introduction. However, in reply to our request for his photo, he says: "For the photo, the reply is negative. I am one of those who believe that the prohibition of the Prophet against pictures is still applicable, except when necessary such as passport etc." About biodata he says: "God's will is to prevail, I submit to it. So I pass my time in His service, and that is enough. If I talk of me, that will be service of the self." We have to study deeply about this problem – Editor.

### WHAT IS ISLAMIC CULTURE SOCIETY (JAPAN) AND WHY ?

Islamic Culture Society (Japan) promises to carry the message of Islam in its cultural perspective and human disposition rather than dogmatic approach of religious propagation, and also to make efforts to satisfy quests about Islam of the intellectuals in Japan irrespective of religion.

This is because our experiences show that dogmatic approach did not bear the expected fruit in the cultural milieu of contemporary Japan. Of course, the Society's objectives and activities are complementary to those of other Islamic organizations.

As one of its activities, the Society publishes its journal, ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM, in English with a separate Japanese version carrying materials on Islam as a cultural force and on its human values. The objective is to establish a forum of communication between Islamic intellectuals and others, between the Japanese and the foreigners, with stronger human touch.

Therefore, it can be said that the Society's scope is wider in the sense that both Muslim and non-Muslim intellectuals and laymen can hold a dialogue through this forum, no doubt, with the ultimate objective of making Islam better-understood and well-received in Japan.



## HAJI UMAR MITA

**NOTE:** In this issue, Haji Umar Mita, the octogenarian Japanese Muslim leader and scholar, is introduced. The life of a Japanese Muslim not only gives the account of an individual, it will also enable our readers to have a glimpse of a part of the history of Islam in Japan—Editor.



Umar Ryoichi Mita

### Dawn of Islam in Japan

Among the countries of Asia, the advent of Islam in Japan is perhaps the most recent development in its history, which is only about 65 years old, that is, Islam found its way into Japan nearly 40 years after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the turning point of the Japanese history from feudalism to modernization. In the wake of the Meiji Restoration, early modern Japan reorganized its industrial and educational systems in the European and American patterns. Together with these western pattern of modernization, Christianity also made its inroads. Notwithstanding this fact, also during this time Islam got its way into Japan and quite a few Japanese were influenced and inspired, ironically, through anti-Islamic propaganda by the interested forces, not through any Islamic preaching. They became the

nucleus to open the path of Allah in this country. But these pioneer Muslims, like those in other countries, lived a poor life and died a poor death. Only three of them are still alive. Among them is Haji Umar Mita, the most typical example of the early Muslims in Japan. In fact, Haji Umar Mita is the most outstanding figure in the annals of Islam in this corner of the world. Now at the age of 82, this Grand Old Man of Islam in Japan can rightly be called the pride of the Japanese Muslims.

### Early life of Haji Umar Mita

Haji Umar Mita whose Japanese name is Ryoichi Mita was born on 19 December 1892 in a *samurai* (warrior) family of Chofu Town in Yamaguchi Prefecture, western Japan. Since childhood Ryoichi did not possess a strong health or physique. His weak and ailing physical con-



stitution caused delay in completion of his education. Therefore, at an advanced age of 24, in March 1916, Ryoichi graduated from the Yamaguchi Commercial College, the forerunner of the present Yamaguchi University. Soon after graduation he proceeded to China, for which he had been yearning so long.

### **Ryoichi Mita in China**

China was a very familiar name to Ryoichi from his childhood because of the Sino-Japanese Wars in the mid-nineties of the last century and the Russo-Japanese Wars in the turn of the present century. Ryoichi reared a dream for going to China all through his early youth. After graduating from college, he crossed over to China. This event not only became the first step toward the fulfilment of his long-cherished desire of seeing the continent but also gave him the first chance to come in contact with Islam.

Meanwhile, Ryoichi earned some skills in medical practice. He travelled through various regions of the Chinese mainland meeting people, learning the Chinese language and earning the experience of life. During those travels, his skills in the medical practice greatly helped him to strengthen the human contact. Specially through these personal contacts he started to know about the actual life of the Muslim, the Muslim way of thinking and the Muslim society. This opportunity could never be expected in Japan. Ryoichi became highly impressed by the life-style of the Muslims. In 1920, he wrote an article on "Islam in China" in a Japanese magazine called "TOA KEIZAI KENKYU" (Far-East Economic Research Journal Nos 1, 2, 3.)

### **Ryoichi Mita happens to meet Haji Omar Kotaro Yamaoka, a Muslim forerunner in Japan**

Meanwhile, the first chapter of the history of Islam in Japan was opened by Haji Omar Kotaro Yamaoka who was the first Japanese Muslim to perform Hajj in 1909, accompanying Mufti Abdul Rashid Ibrahim, a Turkish Muslim leader of Tartar origin who was then living in Japan. After returning to Japan in the following year, Haji Omar Kotaro Yamaoka embarked upon a wide travel across the Japanese islands making lectures and holding discussions about his travel to the holy lands, thus introducing and explaining Islam and the Muslim world. In 1912, Haji Yamaoka wrote and published a number of books on his journey through Arabia and on the grand spectacles of the pilgrimage of Hajj in Mecca. Young Ryoichi, still a student, became highly impressed by the accounts regarding the Islamic lands contained in these books. Thus, it can be assumed that even before going to China Ryoichi had already acquired some background knowledge of Islam.

In 1921, Ryoichi Mita returned to Japan for a while. During his stay in Japan, he attended lectures as well as studied the writings of Haji Omar Kotaro Yamaoka. Then he met Haji Yamaoka for the first time in Kamakura near Tokyo, to learn more about Islam. At that time, Ryoichi Mita was 29 and Haji Yamaoka was 41. Ryoichi had not yet formally accepted Islam although his heart was gradually turning toward Islam.

### **Ryoichi Mita works for Manchurian Railways**

In 1922, Ryoichi Mita joined the Manchurian Railway Company and was posted at the Company's headquarters in Dairen, Manchuria. There Ryoichi entered into his married life. In the office, Ryoichi Mita was in charge of the Inspection Section relating to the industrial inspection in Manchuria. In course of time, along with his promotion to the higher posts, he was transferred from one place to another, which enabled him to see many places including Mukden, Hurbin and so forth and to come in contact with many people. Meanwhile, the Manchurian Incident occurred and the successive long-drawn Sino-Japanese war began, leaving many innocent people in distress. Though an official of the Manchurian Railway Company, Ryoichi Mita devoted himself to the relief of the distressed wherever he went around the northern China on his official duty. This gave him more chances to come in closer contact with the Muslims, thereby serving as incentives for strengthening his determination to embrace Islam.

The year 1941 was the turning point in the life of Ryoichi Mita. Until then although for nearly 30 years he had known Islam, studied it, nurtured the fondness for Islam at heart, nay, although he was already a Muslim in his heart all through those years, he still did not embrace Islam formally. Maybe, this delay was due to the Buddhist religious tradition of a samurai family for generations, and his living environment upto that time was not quite favourable for a hasty change-over.

#### **Ryoichi Mita becomes Umar Mita**

When Ryoichi Mita was transferred to Peking, he decided to make his faith

in Islam public. Therefore, he met Imam Wang Reilan of Nyuchie Masjid of Peking and under his guidance Ryoichi Mita formally declared his faith in Islam in 1941, received the name of Umar, and became a dedicated servant of Allah. Thirtythree years later, even today, Haji Umar Mita recalls that great moment with serene joy of fulfilment and also expresses his hearty gratitude for Imam Reilan for his kind and inspiring guidance during the days after Omar Mita's formal declaration of faith.

Ryoichi Mita's steps toward embracing Islam teaches us a very valuable lesson that it is not the preachings or observance of ceremonies but the love for humanity originated from the deep faith at one's heart and the personal experiences that guide one to find out the way toward the truth. True, Ryoichi Mita was impressed by what Haji Omar Yamaoka had told. But unless Ryoichi Mita's inner heart gave him the right direction, nobody's preaching could change his mind. However, in the year of his declaration of faith, Umar Mita was 49 years old. In his occupational field he was assigned with the job of Counsellor to the Supreme Council of the Federation of the Chinese Muslim Associations as a recognition of his vast, first-hand knowledge and experiences in the Chinese Muslim affairs and his close relations with the Chinese Muslims.

Umar Mita lived in Peking until the end of the wars in 1945 when he resigned from his official posts and returned to Japan.

#### **Umar Mita after returning to Japan**

Leaving behind his 30 years of long life in China, Umar Mita returned to

his native Japan. After returning home he took up the job of teaching Chinese, first at the Kansai University in Osaka and then at the Kita-Kyushu University in the island of Kyushu. But after some time, he met with the disaster of losing his wife. Therefore, he gave up his teaching job in 1952 and settled in Tokyo and decided to engage heart and soul in the religious activities of Islam. Almost during this time, the Japanese Muslims who had so far been leading their individual Islamic life, established the Japan Muslim Association in cooperation with the foreign Muslims living in Japan.



Ryoichi Mita in 1951: Front row,  
2nd from right

### Progress of Islam in Japan

In the meantime, during the 30 years period when Umar Mita had been deepening his faith in Islam while in China, Islam was steadily taking root in Japan. The forces behind this progress was the initiative of Haji Omar Yamaoka who had all along been strenuously working for the building up a foundation for Islam in this country through lectures and publications; the Japanese evacuees from the South-East Asian Muslim coun-

tries where they came under the influence of Muslims there and became Muslim during World War II; and the Turkish Muslim refugees who settled in Japan after leaving their home in the Soviet Union. In fact, the last group of Muslims, that is, the Tartar refugees played a very important role in influencing the Japanese Muslims in their Islamic life. Through their earnest and enthusiastic efforts and with the cooperation of some other friendly Japanese, the first Masjid in Japan was established in Kobe City in 1935 and the second in Tokyo in 1938.

### Umar Mita devotes to Islamic activities in Japan

When Umar Mita came to settle in Tokyo in 1952, he was then 60 years old. In those days, the marks of war destruction of cities throughout Japan still remained. The life of the Japanese people was still in great distress, to say, it was extremely difficult for the common people to make both ends meet in respect of food, clothing and shelter. Even during this toughest of time Omar Mita chose to devote himself to the cause of Islam and to the learning of the Arabic language. He was always at hand when foreign Tabligh groups visited Japan and participated in all their works. In 1957, he went to Pakistan on invitation and undertook various journeys in connection with Tabligh activities in that country and had exchanges of thoughts with the Muslims of an out and out Muslim society. These journeys were not at all easy and safe, specially for the frail health of Umar Mita. In spite of that, God-fearing but undaunted Umar Mita continued his journey in the path



of Allah. In 1958, joining with a Pakistani pilgrims group he went to Mecca and fulfilled his life-long desire of performing Hajj. After that, Umar Mita returned home and started his work with new vigour. In 1960, after the sudden death of Sadiq Imaizumi, first President of Japan Muslim Association, Haji Umar Mita was elected its second President. During his term as President of Japan Muslim Association, he published his works: "ISURAMU RIKAI NO TAME NI" (Understanding Islam) and "ISURAMU NYUMON" (An Introduction to Islam) and "SAHABA MONOGATARI," the Japanese translation of Urdu book HEKAYAT-E-SAHABA by Maulana Muhammad Zakaria and specially translated into English for Haji Umar Mita by the late Hafiz Abdur Rashid Arshad.

### **Haji Umar Mita's resolution for translating the Holy Quran into Japanese**

Exactly during this time, a new pocketbook size Japanese translation of the Holy Quran was brought out by a renowned Japanese publisher and was circulated in a fairly large number. In this connection, it may be mentioned that three more Japanese translations of the Holy Quran were published in 1920, 1937 and 1950, respectively. A fourth translation from the original Arabic was published in 1957. But all of these Japanese translations were rendered by non-Muslim Japanese scholars and obviously they lacked the Islamic standpoint. Moreover, the three previous ones were translated from English or other languages and more or less contained un-Islamic bias or absence of fairness. Therefore, Haji Umar Mita felt the need for a Japanese meaning of the Holy

Quran prepared by a Japanese Muslim and from the original Arabic text. There was no other better person than Haji Umar Mita himself to undertake such a stupendous job. So he made up his mind to do the work himself. He was then 69 years old. He had the anxiety of his frail health and old age, but left the problem to Allah's mercy.

### **Progress in the translation with the support of Rabita-al-Alam-al-Islami, Mecca**

In 1961, at the age of 70, Haji Umar once again left for Pakistan and, for a time, settled in Lahore to continue the work of translation, simultaneously, studying Arabic with the Arabic and Quranic scholars there. During this time, he established contact with Rabita-al-Alam-al-Islami, Mecca, through the good offices of the late Hafiz Abdur Rashid Arshad. On invitation, he visited Mecca and there he received pledge of support from the Rabita for the publication of the Japanese meaning of the Holy Quran. While staying in Saudi Arabia, he made wide contacts with the Quranic scholars of Mecca, Medina, Jeddah, Taif, Riyadh and so forth, and made considerable progress in his work. All through this work the inspiring guidance from the late Hafiz Abdur Rashid Arshad is an unforgettable memory for him. Yet the more unforgettable event during his stay in Saudi Arabia was the death of Hafiz Arshad in a traffic accident. Haji Umar Mita was also travelling in the same car but somehow he was safe. In fact, that he survived and was able to return to Japan was a miraculous event in his life. This was in 1963 when Hafiz Arshad, Haji Mita and some other companions were proceeding to Mecca from Medina



by car. When the car reached Badr, it met an accident and turned turtle. Hafiz Arshad died instantly. Haji Mita escaped death but received serious injury. In course of time, he recovered from the injury and the shock of the accident. The Rabita extended its most generous help and hospitality all through the time of treatment and recovery after the mishap.

### **Progress toward the publication of the Japanese meaning of the Holy Quran**

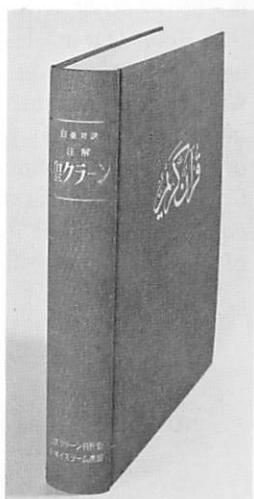
After returning home, Haji Umar Mita continued treatment, at the same time, he also went on with his translation work. During this period, he sometimes lived in Miyazaki in Kyushu and sometimes in Enzan city in Yamanashi Prefecture, for the purpose of recovering health as well as doing his work in a peaceful atmosphere away from the din and bustle of the big cities. During his stay in Enzan, he met with Abu Bakr Morimoto, another stalwart of the Japanese Muslims, for the first time, in 1965. It was a happy occasion in that Haji

Umar Mita felt relieved of anxieties regarding printing of the Japanese meaning of the Holy Quran by availing of the cooperation of a Muslim printing expert such as Abu Bakr Morimoto.

In 1968, the translation of the text was completed and its first revision was accomplished by a committee of revision and review, appointed by the Japan Muslim Association, after continuous study and review for about a year and a-half. Carrying the revised manuscript of the translation, Haji Umar Mita went to Mecca in June 1970, taking Brother Hussain Khan of Pakistan with him. At Mecca, the manuscript was again revised by a committee of scholars appointed by Rabita-al-Alam-al-Islami. After about six months of painstaking review, the work was finally came to the stage



Haji Umar Mita presents a copy of the Japanese Quran to Ambassador Dejeni of Saudi Arabia. From left: Usman Uenoya, Printer of the Japanese Quran, Abu Bakr Morimoto, Haji Umar Mita, Ambassador Dejeni and Hideji Tamura, former Japanese ambassador to Saudi Arabia.



A profile of the Arabic-Japanese Quran (now under revision)

Some mosques in

## SRI LANKA

December 1975

by: Morimoto

1. Front view of the Beruwela Mosque with the tomb of Hazrat Shaikh Ashraf, the first Muslim landing in the island.



②



2. A distant view of the Beruwela Mosque across the lagoon.

③



3. Front view of the Galle Mosque.  
4. Front view of the Kandy Mosque.

④





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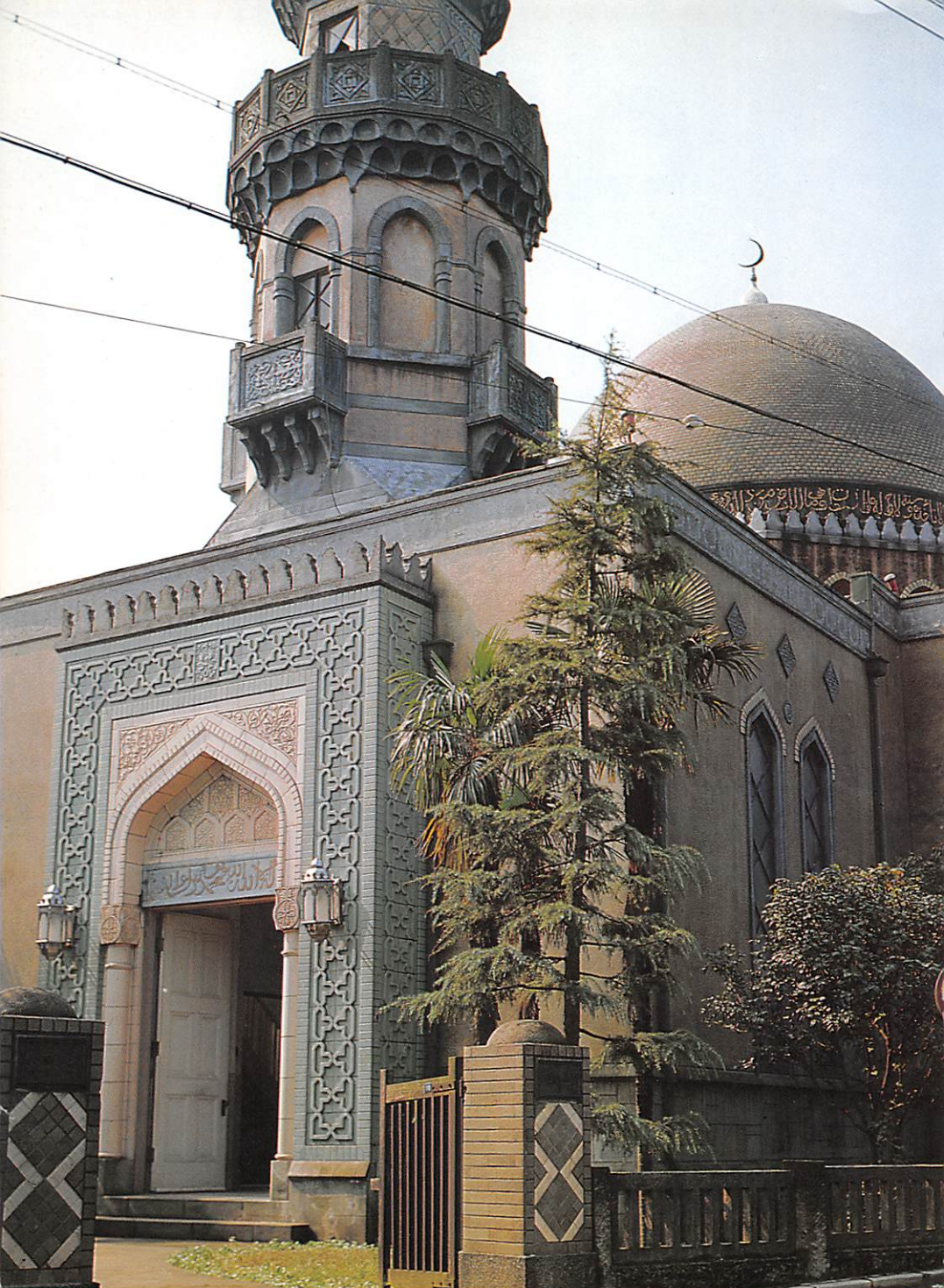
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The Tokyo Mosque (est. 1938)

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Photo by: Morimoto

of printing. Haji Umar Mita then returned to Japan and the manuscript went to the printing press of Takumi Kobo Printing Company of Hiroshima, owned by another Japanese Muslim.

At long last, on 10 June 1972, the printing of the Japanese meaning of the Holy Quran was complete and its first edition was published after 12 years of painstaking and strenuous efforts of Haji Umar Mita who was then already 80 years old. Even after the publication, Haji Umar Mita has continued to write notes of the translation.

#### **Haji Umar Mita's daily life as a Muslim**

Although busily engaged all the time in the work of writing the meaning of the Holy Quran, Haji Umar Mita did never forget his other duties as Muslim. While performing his normal duties, he takes time out to guide the activities of the Japan Muslim Association as its Counsellor. Even at this age of 81, he commutes from his home in the suburb of Tokyo, a two hours' distance, to



Haji Umar Mita in TV programmes

the Tokyo Masjid and to the Association's office. This life pattern of Haji Umar Mita is really an example before the younger generation who are fortunate to receive his guidance regularly. In March 1974, he once again visited Mecca and in November of the same year, attended an Islamic conference held in New Delhi, India.

Haji Umar Mita became 82 on 19 December 1974. Let us pray to Allah for his long and healthy life so that his living example can inspire and guide the Japanese Muslims, now and in the future, to enable them to become worthy of carrying on his noble mission.

**NOTE:** Many individuals and organizations sincerely cooperated with Haji Umar Mita in various ways in his work of the publication of the Japanese version of the Holy Quran. Special mention may be made of the generous support from Rabita-al-Alam-al-Islami, Mecca, who sponsored the publication, the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Tokyo, the Committee for Review and Revision of the Translation consisting of Imam Ainan Safa of Tokyo Masjid, Brother Hussain Khan of Pakistan, late Brother Ahmad Apanai of Turkey, Prof. Abdul Karim Saito and Abu Bakr Morimoto of Japan, and Dr. Salih Mahdi Al-Samarrai of Saudi Arabia, Brother Ahmed Suzuki of Japan, H.E. Mr. Hideji Tamura, former Japanese Ambassador of Japan to Saudi Arabia, Brother Mustafa Komura of Japan, Dr. Aly Hasan El-Samny and Brother El-Sebai, both of Egypt, and many others.



## PHILOSOPHY AND JUSTIFICATION OF FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

by Syed Mohammad Jamil

Brother Syed Mohammed Jamil, President of Holy Quran Society of Pakistan, visited Japan and Korea and also other countries of the Far East several times during the last ten years. In spite of his old age and frail health, he energetically undertook these trips and took pains for the progress of Islam in this part of the world. Travelling around widely in Japan and Korea he provided Islamic guidance and leadership to the Muslims there with great dedication and enthusiasm even though he had to encounter many difficulties in respect of living situations in countries where Islamic way of life is not the general practice. He taught Islam to the Japanese and Korean new Muslims personally as well as through writing. In fact, in the annals of Islam in this part of the world, Syed Mohammed Jamil's contribution is remarkable —Editor.



The writer

The Holy Quran contains not only the details and the requirements of faith, and the commandments subsidiary thereto for implementation in practical life, but it also furnishes the underlying arguments therefor and the benefits accruing therefrom both in this world and in the life hereafter. The arguments for theism and against atheism are suggestively spread over in beautifully varying manner in various Surahs, thereby reinforcing the will and the invitation to undertake the responsibilities placed on man and the devotion therefor expected of him. The arguments for the unapproachably high Oneness of the Creator and against the paradoxical suggestions to the contrary are also similarly spread over, gradually soaking into the attitudes and personality of the individual who familiarises himself

with the contents of the Holy Book or keeps company with persons who have that familiarity in practice. It is not merely the assertion that the Holy Quran is of divine origin, but the proof that it is so that matters hence the supporting irrefutable grounds thereof have been explicitly stated in the Holy Book itself. Similarly in the verse in which backbiting is forbidden, the question is suggestively raised as to "whether you like to eat the flesh of your dead brother which you would normally hate to do." In like fashion, instead of merely forbidding adultery, it is stated "do not go near adultery, it is scandalously dirty, and a bad way (to fulfil your sexual desires)."

Notice the manner of approach and the depth of its meaning in short pithy

sentences addressed to the People of the Book, (Jews and Christians together):

O ye People of the Book! exceed not the bounds in your religion, and say not of Allah save that which is the truth. The Messiah Isa, son of Maryam, is but an apostle of Allah and His word—He cast it upon Maryam—and a spirit from Him. Believe wherefore in Allah and His apostles, and say not: 'three.' Desist, that it may be well for you. Allah is but the One God: hallowed be He that there should be unto Him a son! His is whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth, and sufficeth Allah as a Trustee.

[4/171]

The Holy Quran thus becomes a book of comparative religions and a book of sociology at the same time. Will Durant in his book, *Age of Faith*, says at page 176:

"By general consent it is the best, as well as the first, work in the prose literature of Arabia."

Studied thoroughly it would also be found to be the first and the most illuminating book on comparative religion and sociology.

**Quranic approach to human education is also unique.**

The education of the child starts in its infancy and the best educators of the infant are its parents and the other members of the family in which he or she is born. Within the first seven years of a child's age, his basic mentality has taken form. This form can also be changed or be made to change later, but this requires tremendously increased effort. For purposes of education, the prime factor is the home and the family. Thereafter the most important factor in forming the

character and personality of the individual is the environment in which he moves—his neighbours and associates and the books in human form traversing the roads and the market and at the cultural centres. The books written or printed on paper come very much thereafter. Factually therefore it is the education of the adults who form the leaders of the family and of the society in its various phases, the teachers, the traders, the policemen, the administrators, etc., which is the determining factor for the personality of the child. It is they who mould the society and determine its character. The education of the child follows automatically, unless it is neglected or allowed to go along perverted channels. Education of the child at the school in variance with the life actually lived by the parents and the society at large is bound to be a paradox and a failure.

The Holy Quran approaches the adult in the society whatever his age or sex, or occupation, and makes the adult responsible for the education of the child and, to the extent of his capacity, also of the environment in which he moves. This capacity of the individual to influence and mould the environment is also very great, and incidentally, the effort by the individual to influence and mould the environment if carried on along correct lines and with humble persistence, necessarily further moulds and refines his own personality. The best educators are therefore the family, the man in the street and finally the teacher in the school, provided of course he is truly equipped intellectually and morally. The lines along which the parents are required to mould the personality of the child have been



explicitly prescribed by the Holy Quran.  
To quote a few of them:

### **To the head of the family.**

**O ye who believe! protect yourselves and  
your households from the Fire (of Hell).  
[66/6]**

### **From the father to the son(and daughter).**

**O my son! associate not aught with Allah;  
verily this associating is surely a tremendous wrong.  
[31/13]**

**O my son! though it be but the weight of  
a grain of mustard seed, and though it  
be in a rock or in the heavens, or in the  
earth, Allah shall bring it forth. Verily  
Allah is Subtile, Aware. O my son!  
establish prayer and command that  
which is reputable and forbid iniquity,  
and bear patiently whatsoever may befall  
thee; verily that is of the firmness of  
affairs. And turn not away thy cheek  
from men, nor walk on the earth  
strutlingly verily Allah loveth not any  
vain-glorious boaster. And be modest  
in thy gait and lower thy voice, verily  
the most abominable of voices is the  
voice of ass. [31/16, 17, 18 and 19]**

### **To humanity at large.**

**By the times (and whatever passes through  
the time of the world) verily man is in  
loss, except those who themselves believe  
and work righteous deeds, and enjoin  
upon each other the truth, and enjoin  
upon each other patient persistence in  
right behaviour. [103/1, 2 and 3]**

**This is not but an Admonition unto the  
worlds, unto whom soever of you willet  
to walk straight. [81/27, 28]**

The Holy Quran by itself provides  
necessary education in all phases of life,  
and this education is so comprehensive,  
that if nothing else is taught, it would  
put the individual on the right track  
wherever he goes, and whatever his age

and physical capacities, and dynamise  
them into a rich afflorescence. And this  
is exactly what happened in Arabia early  
in the 7th century A.D. Arabia is a vast  
desert peninsula of more than a million  
square miles with very scanty population  
—and scantier economic resources (visible  
at the time)—scattered over distances of  
hundreds of miles from each other, and  
naturally without any schools or colleges.  
Fancy this inhospitable unlettered sparsely  
populated region becoming the teacher  
of the world for a thousand years in  
almost all the branches of knowledge and  
science then known, and becoming the  
creator of altogether new sciences and  
branches of knowledge, administrative,  
social, and political! The world needs  
to know the type and manner of education  
imparted to these men of the desert,  
so that they became the unquestioned  
educators of the world for so many successive  
centuries. It was nothing else of course  
than the Holy Quran and the divinely  
revealed principles of sociology for man  
which the Prophet taught and implemented.  
Education is factually nothing else than  
the science of formulation of personality,  
starting from the individual and taking it  
to the local group and then to humanity at  
large, and this is one of the major themes  
of the Holy Book. Technical education and  
equipment is only an external clothing for  
the personality which is man. When  
personality is made and attitudes in life  
are crystallized everything else follows  
automatically.

(Adopted from **INDEX-cum-CONCORDANCE**  
for the Holy Quran: An Introduction by S.  
Mohammad Jamil, a publication of The Holy  
Quran Society of Pakistan, Karachi, Pakistan)

## **“The Role of Islam in Africa” with Special Reference to Nigeria**

by Dr. Ahmed A. Onikijipa

The Muslim population of the world is around 700 million and it is growing. The growth is more conspicuous in Africa. I was away from Africa for a decade. When I returned recently, I found that two religions are vying for the supremacy in Africa – Islam and Christianity. In fact, they have no other rivals in this continent.

Islam in Africa is nearly as old as its establishment in the Arabian peninsula by Prophet Muhammad (SAS) in the 7th century. Among the companions of the Prophet (SAS) was Bilal, an Abyssinian, that is an African, who was held in very high esteem by all Muslims. Bilal was the first ‘muazzin’ of Islam. Even Omar Farooq, the second Caliph of Islam used to call Bilal as ‘Sayyidi’ (my lord) with reverence while seeking his advice.

Islam fosters brotherhood among all Muslims as well as the mankind as a whole. In Islam, nobody is superior and, therefore, nobody is inferior. The Holy Quran and the Prophetic Traditions or Hadith go as far as saying that one should obey one’s leader whosoever he may be, irrespective of race or colour. During the early period of Islam in Mecca, Bilal and other Muslims were persecuted by the Quraish clan. Their tyranny became unbearable, so the Muslims migrated from Mecca to Medina

to save their lives. Some of them went to Abyssinia in 615 A.D. and sought refuge with Negus, the Christian king of Abyssinia. Thus, this was the advent of Islam in Africa. The king of Abyssinia gave them shelter and protection from the Quraish’ victimization. These early Muslims connected Africa and Islam into a close bond.

During the Caliphate of Omar bin Khattab, Egypt and its neighbouring places came under the rule of Islam. In the subsequent times, Muslims held their sway over a vast area of the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe. In the year 732 A.D., which marked the first centennial of the death of Muhammad (SAS), “the seal of the prophets, after him no prophet, but thinkers and reformers will appear from mankind,” Muslims were ruling an empire extending from the Bay of Biscay to the Indus and the confines of China, and from the Aral Sea to the lower cataracts of the river Nile.

With respect to the Savannah peoples of West Africa, Islam reached the region in the 8th century, the date from which the written history of West Africa begins. Islam became firmly and strongly rooted in the Mediterranean Africa and the Bilad-al-Sudan (Country of the Black) which stretches from the Atlantic shores in the west to the Red Sea in the east.

Arabic, the language of the Holy Quran, became the lingua franca of the vast region. Islamic schools were established all over and the people's social customs were moulded in the Islamic way by Islamic laws and traditions. In all the countries of the Mediterranean Africa and the Bilad-al-Sudan including Nigeria, Islam has proved an integrative force making it possible for the welding together of diverse tribes into a homogeneous State. For example, Macina, the Sokoto Caliphate and the Mahdi-ist State achieved this end.

The most important effect that Islam caused in Africa was the development of a cosmopolitan attitude among the Africans. Muslims of different tribal groups and countries developed among themselves a sense of brotherhood which they had hitherto never known. They also developed a uniformity of outlook in their social, educational and cultural matters. Even their different languages were also greatly influenced by the Arabic language, the language that the early Muslims carried to Africa. Their sense of brotherhood increased through the congregational prayers of the Muslims five times a day, the larger congregation of Jum'a on Fridays, and still larger ones on the Eid festivals, culminating into the largest Commonwealth of Islam, the Hajj, when Muslims from all over the world, belonging to different tribes and races, speaking different languages and representing different geographical cultures, meet at Mecca and Medina.

Islam has established a very rich and

firm cultural tradition in all the lands it has reached in Africa. In Nigeria, for instance, some public libraries and also those of Lagos University, Ibadan University, Ahmadu Bello University are full of books on Islamic History, Culture and other knowledges pertaining to Islam.

To trace back the history of Nigerian region, in 1324 A.D., some Egyptian scholars accompanied Emperor Mansa Musa when he returned from his Hajj pilgrimage. Under the Emperor's patronage and with the help of these scholars, the first West African university was established at Timbuktu. Among the famous scholars of Africa were Mohammad Kuti in the 15th century, Abdul Rahman Said in the 16th century and Uthman Dan Fodio in the 18th century and so on.

Islam in Nigeria has been making steady progress. The Islamic system of justice (Sharia) has been adopted in the six northern states out of the total of twelve states of Nigeria. The administration of justice has become uniform for the Nigerian Muslims. The Grand Khadi of Nigeria is the President of Muslim Judges of Nigeria, and a member of the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs which is responsible for Islamic developments. There are numerous Islamic societies which are quite active for Islamic welfare. One can see that in all the schools, colleges and universities of Nigeria, Arabic is one of the important subjects. In the city of Kano in the north, the best mosque in West Africa is situated. About 75% of the population of Nigeria are Muslims.

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Dr. Ahmed A. Onikijipa, a Nigerian, became Muslim by the preaching of World Heavyweight Boxing Champion Muhammad Ali and has been engaged in teaching in Libya



# MUSLIMS IN HONG KONG AND MACAO

by Abu Bakr Morimoto

## Introduction

Hong Kong and Macao are geographically a part of the continental China. But politically Hong Kong is a British colony and Macao is a Portuguese territory.

Looking from this background, it is not wrong to think that these two places have nothing to do with Islam and that there is nothing in these two places for which the Muslims should care. But even in these small places which are far away from the zone of Islamic influence, more than twenty thousand Muslims live there and are leading a pious Muslim life. Here also, the call of the 'muazzin' sends echo to the horizon.

Hong Kong is world-famous as an extremely flourished international port of free trade and Macao is well-known as the Monte Carlo of the East for its gambling business. It was a great interest for me to see for myself under what circumstances the Muslims of these two places are leading their Islamic life and in what way their society is organized. This interest is emanated from the standpoint of a person belonging to the molecular Japanese Muslim society with the expectation that the life of the Hong Kong and Macao Muslims, our nearest neighbours, could provide us with

some suggestions toward the building of our life and it is with this interest I visited the two places in November 1974.

## Historical Background

The history of Hong Kong has a link with the tragedy of the Shin Dynasty of China. Until 1840, Hong Kong was nothing but a small fishing village near the coast of Southern China. It was then also a base of the pirate ships of the South China Sea. The British annexed the island to its empire when the Shin Dynasty ceded it to them as war indemnity in 1843, after the first Opium War. Again, after the second Opium War, that is, the result of the sinking of the British ship, "The Arrow", the British annexed the Kowloon Peninsula overlooking the island in 1860. Until World War II, the British built in Hong Kong a modern port and a strong naval base considering its strategic position in the Far East and for its excellent natural harbour. Simultaneously, the island developed and prospered as a free trade port. Since the beginning of the Chinese Republican revolution in 1911 and of the World War I in 1914 the population of Hong Kong rapidly increased. At the same time, industry also grew along with trade in a rapid

pace. Since around World War II, Hong Kong began to play an important role as one of the busiest international airports as well as seaports in the world. It is now a city whose importance is internationally reckoned.

The area of the whole British territory comprising the island of Hong Kong, Kowloon Peninsula, Lantau island and other dots of islands is 1,018 Km<sup>2</sup> with a population of about four million. Almost 98% of the population are Chinese of the Cantonese origin. Besides them are the British and people from various other countries of the world, who are busily engaged in industry, commerce and trade. Among them are Muslims from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia, and also from the Arab countries.

### **Islam in China**

Although the history of the advent of Islam in China is quite old, opinions vary about the date. However, the opinion claiming 651 A.D. as the year of introduction of Islam in China seems to be closer to the fact. Islam took two routes to China, one by land through the central Asia and the other by sea across the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean and the China Seas. It is evident from the historical notes that many Arabs lived in Canton area of China when the Arabs almost monopolistically dominated the South Sea trade route during the period from 10th to 12th century.

Thus, Islam spread all over China and Muslim communities grew in almost every province of the Chinese mainland. Through centuries, the history of the Muslims in China was one of suppres-

sion and persecution on one hand, and of support and cooperation on the other, depending upon the interests of the rulers of China.

It has always been very difficult to obtain a reliable figure about the Muslim population in China. According to Broomhall, who is said to be most authentic about the subject (Islam in China: A Neglected Problem, London, 1910), the Muslim population in China in the turn of the present century was somewhere between 4,727,000 and 9,821,000. Some historical documents put the figure at 30 – 40 million. Some others claim that it never reached over 10 million. Even so, the percentage of Muslim minority of Canton, the nearest city from Hong Kong, where Muslim population is said to be the smallest as compared to other Chinese cities, is 0.14%.

### **Muslims in Hong Kong**

It is said that the first Muslim advent in Hong Kong took place in 1820 and the first mosque was built in 1955. The official figure about the Muslim population is more than 20-thousand. Among them 45% are Chinese Muslims and others are from Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Arab countries, etc. The Chinese Muslims are usually born Muslims, but quite a substantial percentage are new converts. Bulk of the Hong Kong Muslims live in the Hong Kong Island and Kowloon. Very few live in the other smaller islands. Usually, one can find the Muslims living in groups of 15 – 20 people. There is no particular zone which can be called a Muslim quarter.

There are 4 mosques in Hong Kong, three of them with a full-fledged Imam, where regular Jum'a and other prayers are held. With two of these mosques there are facilities of a Muslim graveyard. Primary and middle schools have been established for the children of the Hong Kong Muslim community. Apart from them, there are also facilities of Quran Classes and Islamic Sunday Schools. The official language of Hong Kong is English. Therefore, Quran is taught also in English besides Arabic and Chinese. The following are the three main mosques of Hong Kong:

1. Jamia Masjid: Shelley Street (off Robinson Road), H.K.
2. Muslim Cemetery Mosque: Wongneichong Road, (opposite Race Course), H.K.
3. Kowloon Mosque: Nathan Road, (Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, H.K.)

The majority of the Hong Kong Muslims are members of the following one or more organizations and perform their community activities through them.

1. Islamic Union, Chairman: Mr. O.R. Sadick
2. Pakistan Muslim Association
3. Dawoodi Bohra Association, Chairman: Mr. H.T. Barma
4. Chinese Muslim Association

The first three of these organizations have been united to form a kind of federation known as Incorporated Trustees of the Islamic Community Fund of Hong Kong, headed by Osman bin Talip. It controls the funds for the welfare purpose for the Hong Kong Muslims. The Muslims of Macao also associated with this central organization. The Chi-

nese Muslim Association is not included in this central body.

The Incorporated Trustees of the Islamic Community Fund of Hong Kong is composed of the representatives from the three affiliated bodies and manages the Muslim facilities such as mosques, cemeteries, special Muslim classes and conducts other welfare activities which are usually not given attention by the government of the Colony. Therefore, in Hong Kong different groups and communities have to look after their own welfare works.

This organization publishes its organ Islamic Union Newsletter giving detailed reports on various activities of the Muslims of the island Colony.

The Muslims of Hong Kong are always keen to defend Islam and its prophet from any blasphemy. Recently, a Hong Kong publishing house released a book containing a so-called portrait of Prophet Muhammad (SAS) and describing Islam as a 'fighting religion'. The Muslims immediately protested against this slander and the publishing house, finally, had to withdraw the so-called portrait with an apology. It is likely that the Muslim minority in the predominantly non-Muslim countries quite often has to face such a situation.

### Muslims in Macao

Macao is a small peninsula, a Portuguese overseas territory, situated off the mouth of the Pearl River\*, 64 km west of Hong Kong and has a population of about 300,000, almost 95% of them being Chinese. The peninsula is linked with the Chinese mainland by a narrow neck.



The Portuguese got its possession from the Min Dynasty of China in 1557 with the right of residence. Since then it has remained a Portuguese possession, and flourished as a Portuguese naval and trade centre in the Far East. It has also been used as a bridgehead for the Catholic missionary activities in East Asia. At present, it is a tourist spot with its ruins of the early Portuguese monuments. And for its casinos, it has earned the name of the Monte Carlo of the East. In fact, casino and tourism are the mainstay of the economy of Macao.

Even in such an out of the way place, in the past, Muslims came and went, and some of them made it as their abode. For a time, the Muslim population reached upto 1,000. At present, their number is about 100. In 1774, the Muslims who came to Macao as crew of some European merchant

navies, built a mosque. But in course of time, the mosque met the wear and tear of time for want of care. With the help from the Hong Kong Muslims, the mosque has been rebuilt under the leadership of Dr. Ghulam Hussain Gill of Pakistan and officially opened in February 1974.

The mosque is equipped with all possible facilities necessary for prayer and also with a graveyard. In the courtyard of the mosque there are many old graves of the Muslims who breathed their last in Macao, far away from their native lands. The street in front of the gate of the mosque is known as the Moors' Street or, in Portuguese, Ramal dos Mouros, bearing the testimony of the presense of the past Muslims in Macao over the last 200 years. Standing on the calmly promenade, for a while, I found myself in the bliss of solitude.

\*Chiu Kiang, Zhu-jiang

This Beautiful World series of Kodansha International

## "THE ROAD TO HOLY MECCA"

by

Hussein Yoshio Hirashima

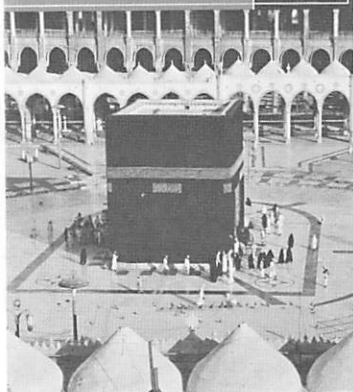
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## The Road to Holy Mecca

HUSSEIN YOSHIO HIRASHIMA



## ON A JAPANESE MUSLIM WOMAN'S JOURNEY THROUGH AFRICAN DESERTS IN A MOTORCAR.

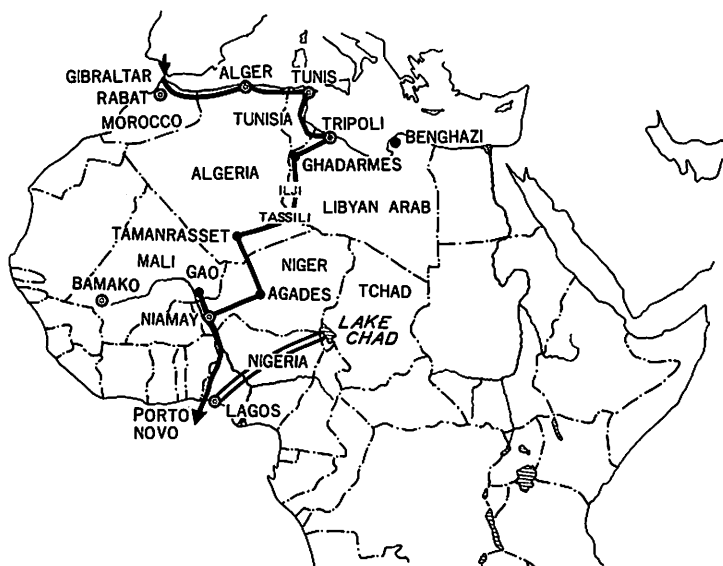
Miss Salma Kayoko Tatsuno, a Japanese Muslim woman, is well-known as a woman adventurer of Japan for her car journeys during the last several years across the Middle-East and the continents of Africa, Australia, Europe and South America. She has already published her travelogues in five volumes. She has also appeared in a number of television programmes giving accounts of the life of woman in the Islamic lands.

She travelled across the desert and semi-desert areas of Africa three times in a motorcar. On the last of them in 1974, she went a journey in a Toyota-Corona SR1 car from early August till

late September, and traversed the intensely hot Saharan deserts, accompanied by two Japanese university professors.

They took the course from Tripoli in Libya, passed through Tamanrasset province of Algeria, crossed over the river Niger and finally headed to the Nigerian capital of Lagos where they reached after travelling about 7000 kilometres. But actually, the total length of the entire journey from the original starting point of Antwerp and including the return journey to Lake Chad and back to Lagos, was about 20,000 kilometres covering nearly four months.

The main purpose of this journey was



Fat line in the map shows Miss Salma Tatsuno's route in the African deserts.

to study the remains of the stone inscriptions left by the ancient Saharan peoples and to see the conditions of the ancient trade routes which were also used by the Romans in the later times.

But for Miss Salma Tatsuno, there was another special inner urge and interest of studying the remains of the Islamic culture that flourished in the area from about one thousand years ago. It was also her purpose to see for herself the life of the people living under the scorching sun. Here she learnt both by body and soul that the Muslims, living under heavy odds in a very inhospitable natural environment, could sustain themselves only because of their unfailing faith in Allah and their dependance on His Mercy and Blessings. Their life was a clear evidence of the great influence of Islam on those people. And today that



Miss Salma Tatsuno (centre) in a TV programme holding the Holy Quran in her hand

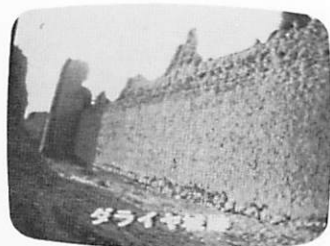
their descendents are so warm-hearted and hospitable to the travellers is an ample testimony of the beauty of Islamic tradition. Thus, she also clearly realized the undeniable difference between them and the other people who did not come under the influence of Islam.

Miss Salma Tatsuno (centre) among a few local people in the desert of Africa.



Ancient stone inscriptions at Ilji in the Saharan desert.





## ISLAM IN THE BROADCAST IN JAPAN — II

In the first issue of the ICF, we published an article reporting the broadcasts in Japan, specially on TV, relating to Islam. Although we like to report many more such broadcasts, there was not much substance in the later part of last year. However, there was a two-hour long documentary broadcast from the Tokyo Broadcasting System (TBS) TV on 2 December, covering the Arab World. In fact, this was the longest ever documentary broadcasting of this kind, which was on the air in a single programme on the Arab World. The title means, in English, "Traversing the land of burning sands — a profile of the present-day Arab people."

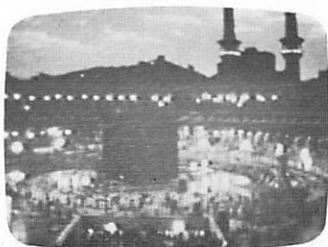
This documentary was produced by the Kajima Productions Ltd., a subsidiary of the Kajima Constructions Co. Ltd., which is a foremost Japanese construction firm headed by the well-known builder-scholar-legislator, Dr. Morinosuke Kajima. Blessed with full cooperation from the

Ministries of Information of Saudi Arabia and Egypt and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the filming team consisting of Takao Sunakawa (Director), Morihsa Iwasaki (Producer), Hussein Yoshio Hira-shima (Cameraman), Takashi Kawai and Tetsuro Tokunaga (Staff) made the film late last year covering a period from 10 August to 21 October.

For their course of visit, apart from the too well-known places, their journey also included the remains of the old caverns in the Arabian desert, the ARAMCO oilfields, the border with Yemen, an interview with a Saudi prince, a view of the parade of the royal guards of Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabian Air Force manoeuvre, marks of war devastations in the neighborhood of the Suez Canal, Palestinian Refugee camps, the Golan Heights, and so on. Hussein Hira-shima took the photography of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. He was the only Muslim in the team.

Specially, the coverage of King Faisal's giving audience to his subjects in the palace, the manoeuvre of the Saudi





Arabian Air Force, the victory parade in Egypt, etc., are no doubt the evidence of special cooperation that has ever been extended to a foreign TV reporting team. Again, for the first time, the TV coverage of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina was possible so intensively. This was because of Hussain Hirashima's being in the specially good books of King Faisal. And also, it was for the first time in history that a TV camera entered the holy premises of the Prophet (SAS)'s tomb at Medina.

The broadcasting time of this documentary was 9:00 – 11:00 P.M., the golden time for TV viewing. The length of the film and its broadcasting time provides some indication as to how deep has become the interest of the Japanese people in the Arab World after the oil shock following the Middle-East War of 1973. This interest is also evident from the detailed review of the film published in the leading Japanese newspapers and from the demand of the people – both

individuals and organizations including the Japanese Foreign Ministry – for a second broadcast of the documentary.

It is a happy augury that the Japanese people of various walks have started to take interest in the Arab World. It is hoped that this interest for knowing the Arab World will not end up in mere superficiality or dilute in the "oil", and that it will lead them to a deeper inquiry as well as understanding also of Islam. [See photo in the last of the colour photo pages.]



The filming team of the Kajima Productions in front of Ministry of Information, Jeddah (other pictures in this page show some scenes from the broadcast)





## READERS FORUM

To the Editor,

... I must congratulate you on the high quality of Islamic Culture Forum. It is a labour of love for you and the consummation of one of your dreams. It reflects the attention and devotion you have given to its get-up. I enjoyed all the articles, which were all very readable. Since it is intended for general readers, it is important that it should not become scholarly in standard.

Although the Forum's evident objective is to report on Islamic culture, both historically and contemporaneously, in various countries, I am inclined to think that Muslims everywhere would be most interested in the status and future of Islam in Japan itself. I appreciate the fact that, at present, there would be little to report, in as much as the Islamic community there is a microscopic one. Nevertheless, I would recommend that every issue should carry some news about Islam in Japan; I am sure there would be great interest in this aspect among the international readership of the Forum.

Your article on Islam in Sri Lanka was excellent. It reflected the deep interest you took in the pursuit of knowledge about Islam here. The content was virtually faultless and the photos most interesting. Congratulations!

Since I am not learned in Muslim culture, I am not qualified to comment critically on the content but I must say — as a layman — that I am impressed by the objectives, content and physical get-up of the Forum ...

Rajagiriya Sri Lanka **Mansoor Ghouse**

First of all, let me congratulate you upon the publication of your first issue of 'Islamic Culture Forum.' I am sure that it will be a valuable contribution to our understanding of Islam ...

Tokyo Japan **D. Bhattasali**

The other day, it was a pleasant surprise to me to receive the first issue of the ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM. Kindly accept my hearty thanks.

In Japan, which is perhaps looked upon as a barren land for Islam by the Muslims of various countries of the world, this is the first

unique attempt to obtain their understanding through a printed medium that there has been such a history and movement of Islam in this country. I believe, in this attempt, Islamic Culture Forum will play an extremely vital role to earn their recognition of our country afresh. This may be a matter to be undertaken by the government but it is not expected of them. Nor we can expect much of the intellectuals.

The Message of Prof. Naito is highly enlightening and illuminating and, sincerely speaking, your sophisticated writings will be immensely useful to achieve understanding of the Muslims in various countries.

I heartily congratulate the forward march of the Islamic Culture Society and pray for its unlimited success ...

Saitama Japan **Makoto Kameko**

It is with interest that I read of your journal, Islamic Culture Forum, in the 9 November '74 edition of The Muslim World. May I be placed on your list of friends to receive copy?

I desire to correspond in friendship with Muslims throughout the world. Through this personal contact I hope to do my part to further Muslim unity. For myself: I am 32 years old, married, have two sons, and am a teacher of reading in our public schools. My hobbies are current affairs, stamp collecting, and art. May we exchange letters with you or any members of your society?

Wishing Allah's continued blessing upon your endeavors,  
19 Arbor Road, Monroe, **Sherwood J. Bien**  
Connecticut 06468, U.S.A.

It was with great pleasure that I received ... the No. 1 issue of your Islamic Culture Forum. I read the issue with great interest and I am pleased that you are able to do so good a work. I congratulate you very much on it. May Allah bless your work ...

Tripoli Libya **Dr. Bashir Ahmed Dultz**

While being in Singapore on a holiday, I happened to read a lovely booklet published by you through a friend of mine here. It carried a well got up article about Sri Lanka Muslims. I was highly pleased to read it. It was a pity that we did not know about your presence in Sri Lanka when you came over



there to collect material for this article. Otherwise, we could have met you and afforded you our kind courtesies and other assistance . . .

It is our sincere prayer that you should be bestowed with Allah's blessings for the stupendous work you are doing in that Land of the Rising Sun for the glory of Islam. We feel proud of you. . . May your efforts be richly rewarded! Ameen.

Colombo Sri Lanka (Alhaj) A.H.M. Azwer,  
Secretary,  
MOTAMAR Council

It gives me great pleasure to write you this letter to acknowledge the receipt of your "Islamic Culture Forum" magazine for September 1974 with profound thanks.

The paper is indeed very much interesting and informative. I have read the inside articles very carefully and the pleasure of my perusal urged me to write the little enclosure for your nearest future publication if it is found presentable.

May Allah bless your organization evermore and make your effort in propagation of Islam a fruitful one, Ameen . . .

Kumasi Ghana Salahuddin P. Tayo

Assalamu Alaikum. Let me, first of all, raise my hands in prayer to Almighty Allah for giving me the opportunity of getting to know some of the activities of brother Muslims from Japan in your highly informative and well-written journal "ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM," which was well-received by the members of my organization, of which I am the President and also it was highly appreciated by all my Muslim brethren in Sri Lanka who were very pleased with all what their co-religionists in Japan are doing in the cause of Islam, and secondly, let me offer our grateful thanks to you for this journal of yours.

I would also like to add that I have included a bit of your news in the weekly news column which I am conducting under heading "MUSLIM NEWS" (a clipping enclosed herewith) of the popular English evening daily "Times of Ceylon." It will be highly appreciative if you will kindly keep me posted of the happenings in Japan of my Muslim brethren and sisters so that I may include these news in my weekly contribution to the "MUSLIM NEWS" here in Sri Lanka...

Colombo Sri Lanka Abdul W.M. Ameer  
President, International  
Islamic Institute

I am very happy to receive the Islamic Culture Forum No. 1 September 1974, published by the Islamic Culture Society.

As a Muslim who is active in the International Islamic Organization as Deputy Secretary General, I have to congratulate toward your success to publish this magazine.

I am sure your magazine would increase the number of printed media communication among Muslims in the World which must be developed today.

I hope under your leadership this magazine will grow and become a leading Islamic magazine in the world.

Djakarta Indonesia Wartomo Dwidjojuwono

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND A REQUEST

We received a large number of letters from our readers and well-wishers. In spite of our best efforts we could not publish all of them for want of space. We express our hearty thanks to them.

We request our correspondents to write their letters only in English and legibly. Correspondences in other languages may go unattended for our inability in those languages. We earnestly request your cooperation.

Islamic Culture Society/Forum

#### CORRECTION

In our No. 1 issue, two mistakes appeared in the article "Muslims in Poland" by Brother Omar Amin Szwarc: 1) On page 22, lines 7-4 from bottom read, "But it so happened that the Turkish Sultans who carried the dignity of the Caliphs had no sympathy for the Polish Muslims in these hard years of their existence." Instead, the lines should read, "The Turkish Sultans who carried the dignity of the Caliphs demanded the rights for Muslims in Poland from the Polish kings in these hard years of their existence." 2) The picture at left bottom of the same page is the masjid at village Kruszyniany and that at right top on p.23 is the masjid at Bohoniki. We sincerely regret the inadvertent mistakes.

## FOUR PROMINENT JAPANESE EMBRACE ISLAM

Four prominent Japanese declared their faith in Islam on 29 December 1974. They, with their given Muslim names, are: Dr. Shawqi Futaki (67), Dr. Tahir Kawanishi (42), Mr. Khalid Futaki (34) and Mr. Adel Fujise (35). The declaration ceremony was conducted at the Tokyo Mosque by Imam Ainan Safa and witnessed by Mr. Abu Bakr Morimoto, Executive Director of Islamic Culture Society, Dr. S. M. Samarrai, Rabita Representative in Tokyo and Mr. Musa Mohammed Umer of Sudan.

Dr. Shawqi Futaki is a well-known medical practitioner of Tokyo and is the Founder-Chairman of the Royal Clinic and the Royal Clinic Health Society, Mr. Khalid Futaki is the Secretary-General of the Society, Dr. Tahir Kawanishi is the Director of Royal Clinic and Mr. Adel Fujise is its Manager.

### WHY BECOME MUSLIM ?

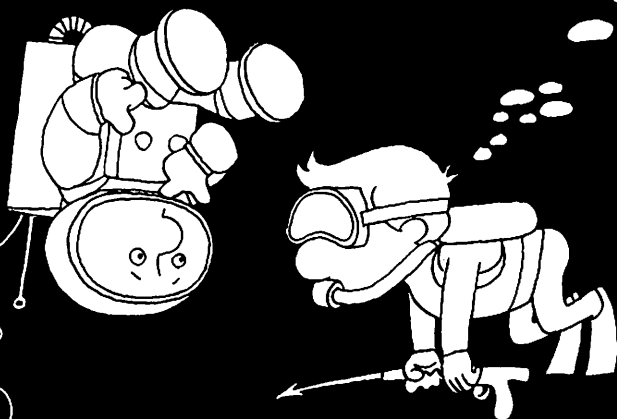
On this question, Associate Editor Chowdhury had an interview with Dr. Tahir Kawanishi and Mr. Khalid Futaki on 20 February. The following is their answer:

“Without any pretension but with all humility, the simple reason is that the Great *Sensei* (Dr. Shawqi Futaki: “*sensei*” means teacher – it is also used as an honorific expressing respect for elderly people) asked us to do so. He has always been imbued with the spirit of service to humanity through his skills of a medical practitioner. He also in-

stilled the same spirit into our mind. Although this spirit has been spontaneous in himself, he had been looking for a spiritual foundation. So far we know, his interest in Islam began to grow when he came to learn that his good old friend Morimoto is a Muslim. After considerable observation of the life of and discourse with Abu Bakr Morimoto, the Great *Sensei* found that his own ideas and principles and the teachings of Islam, specially those in respect of service to humanity, are completely identical. He also found that Islam is the spiritual foundation which he had been looking for. He took the decision and inspired us as well. As we were also instilled with the same spirit, we found no difficulty in immediately agreeing with him. We also had quite long talks with Mr. Morimoto on various aspect of Islam, specially in a country like Japan, and strengthened our conviction”.

In reply to another question, Dr. Kawanishi said that after becoming Muslim he does not find any conflict between his daily life and his belief. He has now a wide contact with Muslims in Tokyo and has the opportunity of studying the Islamic living through such contact as well as through his theoretical study. He also said that he would like to study the medical traditions in the Islamic countries whenever he gets an opportunity.

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